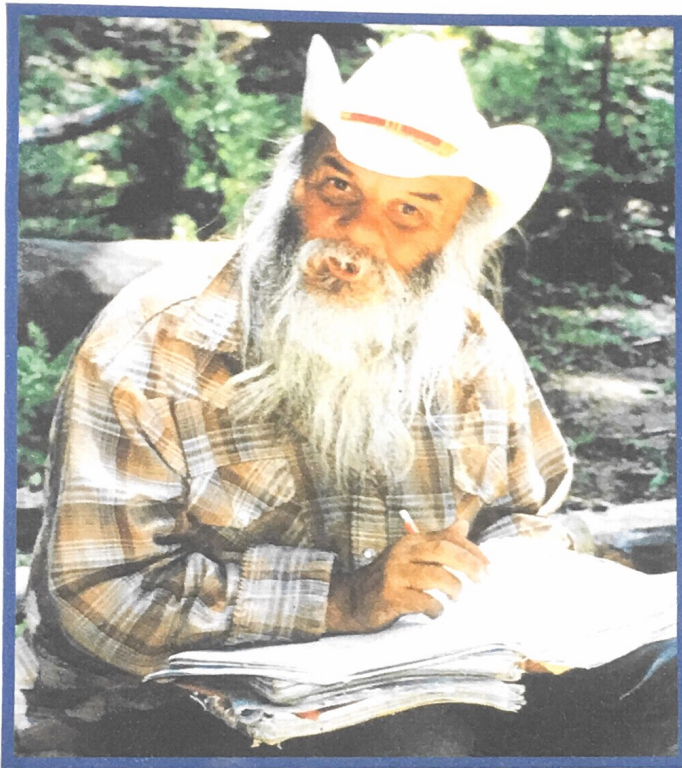




# Rainbow Family

## Life Stories



by Jodey Bateman.  
Interviews with Rainbow  
Family of Living Light  
folks conducted between  
1977 and 2008.

Scanned in 2018.

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15.D SPRING FLOWER - "Rainbow Saved  
My Life"  
-interviewed in 1987.  
at the North Carolina Gathering

19 pages

[15.D]



Spring Flower - Rainbow saved my Life

[Spring Flower asked me to take down her life story at the 1987 North Carolina Gathering.]

Between you and me, I have had intensely good and intensely bad with the Rainbow Family.

I was born on July 18, 1956 in Queens, New York City. My father was an artist trying to be an advertising person, to make it in business - but he was losing jobs constantly. My mother had a lot of problems in coping with life. She was constantly mentally and physically ill. (I'm gonna try to balance out the negative things - but I'll be honest.) I was raised with a brother a year younger than me.

We moved to Brighton Beach, Brooklyn. I remember back as far as when I was four. My parents used to take me to the beach a lot, and I used to run away looking for something different. I wandered off searching for love. I used to go up to strangers and ask them to adopt me.

My mom treated my brother like he was an angel - the best that happened on earth - but she saved the brunt of her anger for me. We were living in a basement apartment. My mother was yelling and screaming. I think she was trying to cook and I was asking her for a hug and she grabbed me by the arm and threw me in the dark, unheated hallway and locked me out for hours. She had told me scary stories about the neighbors, so I was terrified. I banged on the door for hours, screaming, "Mommy, I love you!"

My father and I had a good relationship, but he was gone all the time, looking for jobs. We moved to another part of Brighton Beach and my mom, finally she just let me go out on the street a lot, unprotected. Then school started at age five. I went to P.S. 253.

I remember entering kindergarten and felt really like I was an alien. The teacher had to drag me into class. I basically was a loner in kindergarten. Something happened in the third grade. One day from school, I was walking home and my legs gave out under me and I collapsed on the ground. They called the police, and my parents took me home and put me in the hospital.



Three days later in the hospital, I started feeling better. The nurses gave me attention. I stayed one month to take a bunch of unnecessary physical tests. I think it was from my home life and my school life. Then they sent me home and I got sick again. So they sent me to another hospital after that and my mother screamed and yelled at me that I was faking. She used to call me all kinds of derogatory names. She told me I was an accident and I never should have been born. She told me that constantly throughout the years. So anyways, now we get to the exciting part.

We come to the fourth grade, which was one of my roughest years. I would draw pictures of people of all different races holding hands in a circle, which came out of my own head, because I never really saw images of that anywhere that I know of. And I'd look out the window at trees and fantasize being in the country, which I had never been in - just from pictures. The teacher called me stupid in front of the class.

I was the brunt of all the kids making fun of me. They called me "contaminated." They also called me "different." They would try to fight me, but I refused to fight back because I didn't believe in fighting. This continued through the fifth, sixth and seventh grades.

In 1969, when I was 12 years old, I saw a poster for Woodstock on the street. I had a strong feeling that I should be there, but I didn't know what it was about. So I went home and asked my parents for permission to go there and money to go. They refused, saying, "We won't let you go to a place like that." By this time, I was a truant. I had stopped attending school. The school counsellor said, "We can't make her conform to what we want."

I was sending away for tourist road maps a lot for states like Colorado - mountainous country states. I fantasized going there. Around age 13 or 14 I went to Earth Day in Central Park. At Earth Day I saw people in a circle smoking marijuana, but I didn't know what it was. That was my first gathering-type thing.

When I was 14, my father brought home a bunch of "underground" newspapers he found in a garbage can -



East Village Other, the Ann Arbor Sun and the San Francisco 3  
Good Times. I took these papers to my bed and read them intensely.  
The thing that struck me the most about them was the love. My eyes  
were opened. I said "This is what I've been looking for!" After  
that I bought a lot of books by Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin. I  
studied them intensely and I began to have consciousness about  
the war in Vietnam.

Another turning point one day I had a big argument with my  
mother about why I wasn't attending school regularly. It  
was February of '71. So I took my coat, ran out the door to the  
subway and went to Greenwich Village. I walked down the  
street and saw a group of long-haired people and told them  
I had just run away from home and asked them for a place to  
stay. They took me to the Greenwich Village Peace Church,  
which was used for anti-war activities.

I walked into the church. There was a conference going on  
about organizing against the war in Vietnam, and I immediately  
got involved in anti-war activities. I was overwhelmed by the  
love and acceptance there. For the first time in my life, I felt  
accepted. From this church I stayed in different people's houses  
called crash pads. People warned me against the cops, that I  
was a fugitive and I should look for ID's saying that I was 18.

From there after three weeks I ended up staying in a Christian  
Jesus place called Shiloh House. There I met a black guy  
named Norman. He and I got to talking about how messed up  
society was. We talked about going out west and looking for  
communes to live in and I wanted to go to a free school.  
One day we went on the road hitchhiking. It was still February.  
It was freezing. I didn't have a sleeping bag. But when we left  
New York City, I saw the country for the first time. It was like  
magic for me. When I saw cows in the wild that's what it was for  
me - it was a whole new experience. I'd never seen a cow in a  
pasture before except in pictures.

One night we were in the mountains near Huntington, West  
Virginia. This drunk hillbilly woman picked us up in the  
middle of the night. She offered to take us across West Virginia  
but first she took us to a bar. When we walked into the bar, all



these white men were in the bar drinking. Norman was black, remember, and I was dressed as a hippie. It was like a scene from Easy Rider, I tell you.

They all turned and stared at us and in a minute I knew we weren't welcome. We started to go to the door and they began throwing beer cans and beer bottles at us. Somebody else got us a hotel room and said "Get out of town by dawn, or you may not live to see the next day."

We hitched the next day and got stuck in a snow storm in Missouri. From there we got as far as Fort Worth, Texas. We stayed in a crack pad there and I was selling an underground paper called Outlaw Times, which was put out by the White Panthers. The police picked us up for selling the papers. They were angry because the paper exposed all their nicks. I was really afraid the police would send me back to New York. I refused to tell them my name and age. They ended up letting me and Norman go, but they confiscated all the papers and told us not to sell any more.

By this time I was smoking a lot of marijuana and experimenting with other drugs. Somebody told us about a commune in Taos called Morning Star. We hitch hiked there and ended up staying there for a few weeks, but by the time we got there, the commune was in the process of breaking up.

We were on our way to LA, but we only got as far as Albuquerque. A Mexican picked us up and let us stay in his house. Me and Norman started drifting apart and the Mexican convinced me to call my parents. I called my parents from a pay phone and told them what city I was in. Apparently they were able to trace the call. Before I knew it, a cop car stopped by the phone booth. They told me that they weren't going to hurt me, but they took me to the juvenile jail and treated me like a criminal. They locked me in a room and took me out in handcuffs to the plane a few days later and sent me back to New York. I told myself after that I would never trust the police.

When I arrived back in New York, I went back to junior high school. Now the kids called me a dirty hippie. So I ran



away three more times after that - got as far as Chicago 5 twice, and then Reno, Nevada. When I got back to New York, I hung out in Washington Square Park a lot smoking marijuana and listening to music. I was also politically active against the war in Vietnam. I went to the May Day demonstration in Washington DC with my parents' permission.

Then in 1972, I ran away again and went to DC. I was camping out in front of the White House on a peace vigil. I met Foxfire there. One day two brothers came by dressed in white robes. They were handing out booklets called the Rainbow Oracle and a pamphlet inviting people to come to the first Rainbow Gathering in Colorado. I was highly impressed. I said, "This is what I want."

I set off hitch hiking with a 12-year-old runaway boy. We got as far as Boulder, Colorado and began to ask people for rides to the gathering. This big police grabbed us both and told us, "You're not going to that gathering." They took us to a makeshift police station that was setup to harass the gathering.

The state was really scared. I told them I was 18. They laughed. They scared my boy companion into snitching me out. They threw me in jail. I had a 21-year-old social worker come see me. She told me, "When you're my age, you're gonna outgrow this Rainbow stuff and you'll want to be part of society."

They sent me back against my will to New York in handcuffs on a plane. In New York, the judge threatened to lock me up until I was 18 if I ran away again. I tried to tell him how unbearable school and home were, but he wouldn't listen.

Back in New York, I met a man named Paul. I legally dropped out of school when I was 16. Me and Paul began to live together in an urban commune with my parents' permission. What else could they do? Everyone in the commune was going west and I wanted to go too. A friend gave me some phony ID and me, Paul and some other people took a van and drove to California.

I lived in San Francisco for a while. Me and Paul had a big argument after somebody dosed me with too much LSD. I heard there was going to be a small Rainbow Gathering in Lake Arrowhead.



6 Oregon. I hitch hiked alone there. When I got to Tualuma, there was no gathering but I made some friends. I spent the summer there, and Paul and I rejoined.

When Fall came around we went back to San Francisco and spent the winter there. In the summer of '74 some friends told us about a fair up at Spokane, Washington, so we hitch hiked to Spokane and arrived in the middle of the night and the person who gave us the ride said, "I'll take you to Highbridge Park." When we arrived at the park, there were a lot of people but it was too dark to see and we slept by a river. I woke up the next morning and saw on a tree above my head was a hand-painted sign saying RAINBOW FAMILY OF LIVING LIGHT. Paul then exclaimed sarcastically, "You finally found your Rainbow Family!" I was overjoyed.

I found out later that Highbridge was set up by the Rainbow Family for people to camp out in during the World's Fair. I joined the Rainbow camp and participated and made a lot of friends. Paul got drunk a lot and beat me. When that happened, the Rainbow Family formed a circle around me, to prevent him from beating me.

Then the Rainbow Family took me to a church they rented in Spokane and I lived there. From now on I say we. We were going to turn the church into an alternative center, but the owners of the church threw us out when they found out some people were letting dogs sleep in the pews. I learned how to do macramé at that church.

Me and Paul got back together and we went traveling with the Rainbow Family to Chelan, Washington, to pick apples. I was 18, legal age, so it was safe to call my parents. I told them what I was doing. They said, "Oh, how awful! Why don't you come back to New York?" and I refused.

From there, the Rainbow people were going to Bisbee, Arizona, to set up a community. We had a caravan of two buses. I rode on a bus named Apple Annie. The two buses separated in Eugene, Oregon, over a few arguments. I stayed on Apple Annie. We went as far as Indio, California and the bus got stuck in the sand and we ran out of gas. We



had to pay to have the bus towed and we picked taggerlines for gas money and some friendly hippies turned us on to a lot of dates for free. We finally got to Bisbee to the land that we had been promised. The land turned out to be in the middle of the desert. It had no water - and a lot of trash.

After one week in the desert me, Paul and some other people decided to rent a house in town. We opened the house to people to take showers and get some water and before you knew it, all the people who had told us to stay out on the land with them had moved into the house. It was a tiny house which very soon became overcrowded.

I got a part-time baby-sitting job to help pay expenses. Apple Annie was parked in the Circle K parking lot. Circle K called the cops. Over ten people were arrested. A female judge told people either leave town or stay in jail. Paul was one of the people arrested. So a bunch of us decided to go to Tucson.

We found a place in Tucson called Thurber Court that had about ten adobe houses and a landlady who hardly ever came for the rent. When she did come, we gave her some beadwork, which she accepted for the rent.

There were some buses parked around there - though Apple Annie stayed in Bisbee - and the neighbors at our place were dealing LSD and marijuana. I sold macramé necklaces on the streets.

We spent the winter in Tucson and then planned to go to the Arkansas Gathering. Paul was beating me again. I left him for a month. I went to San Diego with another brother. Paul and I became friends again on the phone and I went with him back to Tucson.

From there we took Paul's car he had just bought and we went early to Arkansas. We went to a Rainbow house in the country near Boxley outside of Eureka Springs and there were over 20 people there. Everyone had staph and I caught it pretty bad. The landlord kicked us out. He said there were too many people there. We went to a place called Snowball. We stayed there until we found a gathering site - which was



hard to find because of local opposition. We had to cross a waist-high river to get to the site. At the gathering, me and Paul began to drift apart. The gathering was my first major gathering and despite the stuff, it was a beautiful experience.

After the gathering we went to Oklahoma to clear brush. I left Paul and went to stay with a woman named Oro. She was very healing to me. Then Paul and me and six other people headed west. We got to Grand Junction, Colorado, to pick peaches. Paul fell in love with a lady named Shalom and I met a man named Chip. We had a very short-lived relationship. We all traveled together to Chelan to pick apples. Chip and I split up. After Chip dumped me, I was crushed. I got very depressed and I had a dream to go to the Love Family in Seattle.

I hitch hiked there and when I first arrived, they were very kind to me. They sent me to their farm and I really enjoyed it and made many friends. Then they told me I had to go back to Seattle. They put me in a house doing a lot of house work. I discovered I was pregnant by Chip.

Then things began to change. They had these morning meetings where people would get up at 4 a.m. every morning, smoke marijuana and read the Bible and an elder led the sessions. I didn't agree with what he was saying about certain Bible passages. Instead of listening to me, he yelled at me that women ought not to speak.

At one point Love Israel believed that all the women should be thin. They placed all the women on a very light diet. A typical dinner for me was: half a slice of bread, half a cup of rice and a cup of salad. The diet really fucked me up. And then I found out that Love Israel's pregnant ladies could eat all the protein they wanted. The Love Family believe women are inferior. It's in their charter. A lot of the Love Family women were anorexic.

The incident that made me leave was when the Love Family acquired an old World War II boat. I was six months pregnant and severely anemic and Love declared that



everyone had to work on the boat, both men and women. They put me in the basement of the boat with no ventilation to scrape paint off the walls. After 15 minutes there, I almost passed out. I begged to come up to the top to get some air, but the male elder refused, so I disobeyed him & came up anyway and a woman named Patience took compassion and sent me home to rest. That evening at the Love Family's restaurant called the Front Door Inn, Love and another elder confronted me about disobeying and told me as punishment I had to go down and work twice as long in the basement of the boat. Instead, I got upset and decided to leave the next day. I convinced another pregnant woman to go with me, and we hitch hiked to her parents' house in Oregon. Her dad opened the refrigerator. He said "Here - take all the milk you want and all the cheese you want," and I ate well.

Afterwards I stayed in different people's houses and I planned to have a natural childbirth. I heard about the Rainbow Gathering in Montana and wanted to have the baby there. When I was eight months pregnant, I took a bus to Missoula, Montana, and stayed at the Rainbow House there for a few weeks. But some single young guys said a pregnant woman there would interfere with their partying. I might as well tell it - the truth is the truth.

I stayed at the Seed Camp with Barry and Sunny and Tony Angel and a bunch of other people. Barry and Sunny told me to go back to Missoula and get on welfare because they were having some problems and they couldn't handle a pregnant woman there and they thought my labor would be difficult. Then I went to the Missoula welfare department and the woman there tried to convince me to put up my baby for adoption. They told me they had ten people willing to pay over \$10,000 for the baby. I angrily refused.

I rented a motel cabin and gave an open invitation to the Rainbow Family to come on over. The house filled up quickly. One day I went into labor and went to the hospital with some Rainbow friends. The doctor told me I had active genital herpes, so I had to have a Caesarean. My son



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Erin Seth was born June 17, 1976. When I got back to my cabin, it was trashed out because Bear had a drunken party there. I just wanted a mellow place to be.

I still wanted to get to that gathering at all costs. I had planned to find a Rainbow community to live in where I could raise my child in peace. When it was time for the gathering, people advised me not to go because of my recent Caesarean. Again people were trying to run my life. I told them, "I came this far - I'm not gonna turn back now!"

I went to a health food store in Missoula and started asking for rides to the gathering. I met a kind couple who gave me and Erin a ride to the site. When we arrived at the site, people suggested that I stay in Bus Village. I told people, "I came this far, I want to go to the main site!"

So I enlisted some help to carry my gear. I got to the main site and collapsed with exhaustion. I spent the next few days enjoying the gathering. But then I remembered that I wanted to find a community. When it was my turn with the Feather, I got up in front of everybody and told them what I was looking for. I had Erin in my arms. Silence fell upon the circle. Finally someone shouted, "Go to Tennessee and go to Stephen Gaskin's farm!"

But I wanted to live with the Rainbow Family. So I felt rejected and began to cry. The circle began to break up when that happened, leaving me and Erin alone.

Finally, some friends of mine from the Arkansas Gathering came over and hugged me. They told me, "We're traveling, we don't have a home, but you're welcome to come with us." We left the gathering the next day and headed for Washington State in their pick up truck. We ended up spending a month in the Olympic rain forest in an abandoned cabin.

After that they told me they wanted to go to Israel, so I connected with a brother who I had met in Arkansas and Montana. I lived with him for several months in Everett, Washington. Me and him had a large argument over work and paying expenses. I was doing most of the work and paying most of the expenses and he got stoned all the time, but me and him,



we didn't have a relationship.

I then connected with a sister who I met through Love Family days. She got me an apartment in Seattle. I was on welfare. She sat down and read the Bible to me and told me that Jesus was love. I really got into it and accepted Jesus.

After that I got in touch with my parents and I planned to visit them in New York for three days and then go back to Seattle. They paid my expense on a one-way bus fare. When I arrived in New York, they offered to watch my baby Erin for me for free. I ended up getting stuck in New York.

I joined a Christian church, thinking I would find love and fellowship there. I retained my Rainbow ways. At first the church people acted as if they accepted me. Then they began to tell me that my life-style was a sin. I spent a few years working hard for them, truly believing that Jesus was love. I got hit and harassed on the streets a few times by gangs when I was passing out Christian literature. The church people kept putting down my hippie life style and trying to get me to go straight. I didn't use any drugs.

One day they had a speaker who claimed that nuclear war was God's righteous judgment on earth. I was outraged. I spoke up and said, "How can a loving God condone nuclear war? I thought Jesus was love!" Instead of answering what I said, they told me to stop doubting God.

The next Sunday, they were gonna have a social event after church. They invited everyone but me. I confronted the pastor. She told me I shouldn't go because I would be a bad influence on the young people because of my long hippie dresser. It was Erin's third birthday. I angrily shouted "You're a bunch of hypocrites! I'm leaving this Jesus trip!"

After that I rejoined the peace movement and got heavily involved in anti-nuclear activities in New York City. In 1980, I met a man at an anti-nuclear demonstration. We fell in love. We planned to go to the 1980 Rainbow Gathering in West Virginia and get married. When we arrived at the gathering, it was beautiful. Barry gave me a big hug and apologized for all the stuff that happened in 1976. Medicine Story married me to the man in front of 1,000 people. We later got legally married.

After the gathering, we lived in New York. We missed several



gatherings, but then the man started using cocaine and beat me repeatedly. In 1982, I had a daughter. I thought it would save the marriage. Things got worse after she was born. At the same time, I got my GED and went to college. I was an A student. My mother died in 1983. In 1985, I went to the Rainbow People in Central Park. At that point, my interest in Rainbow renewed, but my home life was a disaster.

Me and my daughter and my husband went to the Missouri Gathering on Garrick's bus in the hope that it would bring peace to our marriage. The bus broke down on the way to the gathering some place in Pennsylvania and I began to get very depressed, and I felt myself breaking down from all the stress. My husband wouldn't let any body talk to me. The bus got fixed and we were on the road again. Then my husband hit me on the mouth on the bus.

Garrick stopped the bus and we had a council. I was too broken down to really speak. The council said that my husband had to behave himself on the rest of the trip or hitch hike. I could no longer take care of myself or my kids. I thought about committing suicide at the gathering, I was so depressed.

When we arrived at the gathering site in Missouri, someone put their arm around me and said, "Welcome home!" and I broke down crying in their arms. They led me to somebody's bus with my husband angrily trying to chase me, but some brothers prevented him from doing so. In the bus, the people there were very kind to me and I requested they take me to the healing center. A sister took me there, and when I got there, I completely fell apart.

The people there embraced me, laid me on a table, told me they loved me and took care of me for a while. My husband tried to chase me throughout the gathering. People had to keep him away from me and people took care of our children. I was terrified of being a single mother with two children. I felt I couldn't handle it.

On July 4 at high noon there was an hour of silence. I actually felt happy and at peace for that one hour. We all joined hands in a circle and prayed for world peace. I prayed for peace in my life.

After the hour of silence, my husband began to get after me



again. I hid out from him, which was very hard because there<sup>3</sup> was no specific place set aside for abused women. After my scene, the sister's circle decided to set aside a space for abused women.

On July 7, it seemed like most of the people were leaving and I was very sick. I caught the Rainbow runs. I was still very freaked out and suicidal thoughts began to plague me. I wanted to reach out for help. A brother invited me to come to his space for healing. So I set out for his place on the trail, but I was very weak. I almost collapsed and I began to scream, "I want to die! I want to die!"

A crowd surrounded me. I went into convulsions and the crowd held me and told me that they loved me. They took me in their arms and spoke kind loving words to me. They held a healing ceremony for me. I feel the Rainbow Family saved my life at that time.

A sister named Feather offered to take care of me in her tipi. They carried me to Feather's tipi on the hill. A brother named Learner came over to me and offered to help me heal. Since the gathering was almost over, Feather offered for me and Learner to go with her and some others to Arizona to form a healing community. So we left the gathering and went to St. Louis and camped out at a park for Leonard Peltier's trial.

Before we left the gathering, a sister from New Mexico offered to temporarily take my daughter until me and my husband both got our lives together. So my daughter went with her and Erin went with me and Learner. My husband went back to New York.

I stayed with Learner in St. Louis for a month. Then we went to Arizona and camped out in Flagstaff. Afterwards, me and Erin and Learner went up to the Nevada City, California, regional Rainbow Gathering. We had a very good time there. From there we went to Learner's house in Riverside, California, and spent nine months fixing his broken-down van and raising money. His parents were strict Seventh Day Adventists, so there were lots of life-style conflicts.

After we got the van fixed, we headed for the Pennsylvania Gathering. The Pennsylvania Gathering was one of the best gatherings I've ever been to. My husband was there. He quit using cocaine and stopped being violent. We made peace, but



Decided to get a divorce with joint custody of our daughter. She has been living with him since then.

Me and Learner then planned to find or make a Rainbow community. We stayed in Pennsylvania for cleanup until August. We made many close friends. We left and went to New York City to council with my husband concerning my daughter. I took my daughter and Erin and we traveled through New York checking out different communities.

From there we went south to Reidville, North Carolina, for the Thanksgiving Rainbow Council. I gave my daughter back to my ex-husband. Me, Learner and Erin spent a week in Tennessee. Then we planned to go the northern route to California and then back to the gathering in the southern Appalachians. When we got to Indiana on Interstate 65, the engine blew. We hitch hiked and some rednecks picked us up, took us to their house and beat up Learner because of his long hair. We escaped from there, caught a ride and stayed with some people we found in the Rainbow Guide.

We spent the winter in Chicago, homeless, cold and broke most of the time. Some people scammed on us, took advantage of us and ripped us off for over \$500. Then I discovered I was pregnant. I couldn't handle having another child emotionally, physically or financially. Learner wanted the baby. We had a big argument. I called my father in New York. He offered to pay any way to New York and my brother would pay for an abortion.

I took Erin and went to New York by plane. I was very bummed out. I felt myself breaking down again. I really missed Learner, yet I was hurt and upset. I got the abortion. My father and my brother tried to persuade me to leave the Rainbow and get a straight job, and we had a big argument with me saying, "I'm not missing this gathering!"

So I called some Rainbow people who had a house in Tennessee and told them what I felt and what was going on. They told me to love me, to come on down and they'd help me heal. I took Erin and got a one-way bus ticket to Tennessee. I arrived April 3 during a snowstorm. Again



I was very sick and breaking down from all the stress. 15  
They took care of me.

I began to get better. Me and Leanne had a phone call and made peace. So I began to get involved with the preparations for the North Carolina Gathering.

It's really intense, talking about this stuff. Being in the Rainbow Family has saved my life on several occasions and I feel it's my family and I belong here. It's a big extended family where everybody helps each other.

[During the gathering, two radical therapists tried to help Spring Flower. At the end of the gathering she commented, "The gathering in North Carolina this year was the most loving gathering I have been to."

Spring Flower asked me to add the following, which she wrote for ALL WAYS FREE, the Rainbow newspaper.]

I came to Rainbow a lost, abused child in 1972. I have experienced periods of intense love and periods of intense pain, sort of like going up to a high mountain and then going down into a deep, dark and frightening canyon. People who know me have seen me in both. I have attended and helped out in gatherings, Rainbow houses and traveled in family vehicles. I tried to help out to the best of my ability, wherever I was needed.

At the 1987 Thanksgiving Council in Texas, I came to yet another turning/breaking point. I felt so afraid of being lost and abandoned.

At the gathering, everyone says "I love you" but when it's over, they leave and my pain is still there. I felt that most people only superficially loved me, but when confronted by my emotional problems, they couldn't deal with me. My emotional problems were too much for me to handle all by myself, so I decided that instead of being an unwelcome burden on myself and others, I'd find a painless method to end my life. I was seriously planning and contemplating this.

I have felt that life on this world is a cold, hard place and a constant struggle. I have seen how insensitive people can be and the social problems like homelessness, starvation and war that stem from that insensitivity.

"I wanted peace at ALL costs - even my life. I felt like an accident that shouldn't have happened. My mom used to tell me that constantly.



I believed it.

Then I cried out to God for an answer.

I also repeatedly came to brothers and sisters of the Rainbow for help. I received a spectrum of responses from lots of good hugs to, "I love you. I want you to heal, to "Grow up! Get your shit together all by yourself! You're not a child any more! Stop burdening us with your problems and draining our energy!" The latter really hurt and only made my problems worse.

I do want to thank the people who did care. They know who they are. I was honest in humbling myself and admitting my pain, fear, confusion and depression were too much for me to handle by myself. Why should I lie to you and put on a false front of self-confidence that doesn't exist? That's what Babylon does.

Anyway, I wrote a note at the council, left it in my tent early in the morning while everyone else was asleep, as not to have to face anyone. I planned to leave hitch hiking and either go away from everyone so they could not stop me and I'd find a painless way to die and thus hopefully find peace or?

I was lost, confused and scared.

Everyone else was dealing with the business of the Gathering. I didn't want to be in the way with my problems. That's why I took off so early in the morning. I was also afraid of receiving a negative response, such as the judgmental comments I spoke of earlier. My note read like this:

"Brothers and sisters I love you and appreciate your love and caring about me. I am in too much pain to go on. Please take my things and divide them up among yourselves to whoever has need of them. I don't want to burden you or myself with my problems any more - so I am ending my life. I'm going on the road. Maybe some Tex as redneck will do it for me."

Then I left. I walked away from the council with no gear except the clothes on my back. I walked about half a mile. I had not eaten. With my hypoglycemia, that drained my energy and I was light-headed and confused.

Then I asked God "What do you want me to do?" Inside myself a strength appeared. A gentle but firm inner voice said "Go back towards the Rainbow site. Do no harm to yourself at all. Go now."



I turned around reluctantly and walked to the place where we held the council. I knelt down by the ashes of the council fire pit and began to cry. I cried for a while. I felt so alone.

Soon a brother came by. He softly said, "Why are you crying? We've been searching all over for you." He took me into his arms and hugged me. We both returned to the main camp. Apparently, my note was found in my tent and for the next hour or more, I went inside myself and felt the struggle between the love and the empty pain that tore me apart. A brother held me in his arms, rocking me, talking with me, like it was a bad acid trip. That brother was my only grip on reality, although I could hear people around me talking.

I did ask during the council about a Rainbow Healing Center, to be set up for people with emotional problems. My belief is once I show peace, loving myself, then I can help others and heal the earth. I'm tired of breaking down getting better and just breaking down again.

I was amazed at the kindness I've received even from the most intense arguers at the council. I got some offers of places to go after the council. It felt real good to know that people did want me. I can't remember what happened that day. I did run off a second time. A brother came after me and refused to let me act out my self-destructive urges. I told him that I just wanted peace and to end the pain. We came back towards camp and were met by some strong, loving sisters.

They told the brother that there was to be a Sisters' Council and the sisters formed a circle around a circle around me and embraced me a lot and a kind, beautiful sister told me "You have the body of an adult woman, but in reality, you're emotionally still a hurt 14-year old runaway. I'm going to help you. I'll nurture you like a plant. God has showed me to do this."

I replied, "As long as I can be healed and stay healed."

So I went home with this sister. Social workers, teachers, establishment therapists could not help me, but the Rainbow Family has. I believe that God is working through the Rainbow Family to bring peace, love and healing to the world.

I have a vision for a Rainbow Healing Center on land to be a full-time place and refuge for the brothers and sisters who come for help. I have found many communities only want healthy people and shun away those who need their tender care and help.



Babylon cannot help them!

There is a need for an emotional healing support space at gatherings. When a person refuses or cannot act in ways expected by home, school and other institutions, they are usually put down, ridiculed and even abused.

There are also situations such as forced incest, rape and other forms of abuse that are present in society at large which traumatize people and cause unhappiness. These people hear about Rainbow Gatherings and seek out love, emotional support and healing.

The open environment of gatherings permits people to "let it all hang out" where in the usual society, people risk arrest and involuntary psychiatric hospitalization if they let their defenses down and drop their false masks of "everything is fine."

There is also an atmosphere of hugging freely, which most people need, but which society at large is greatly deprived of. People will come to gatherings and open up. We need to give them focused attention.

The CALM/MASH healing center at gatherings is great for cuts, scrapes, the "runs," public health education and other practical medical needs. Unfortunately people bring long-term emotional problems to an overworked, understaffed CALM who have difficulty dealing with an upset person freaking out while 20 others are suffering sprained limbs, sunstroke, etc.

So, a separate space is needed for the assorted emotional problems which arise. The space will be a safe, non-judgmental area. Hopefully there will be an equal relationship between people and not an unequal doctor/patient relationship that encourages a condescending attitude on the part of the helper and a feeling of inferiority on the part of the person being helped. In the Rainbow emotional support/healing space, people who heal and people in need of support will equally participate in whatever capacity they are able to. This area is not to be a place for one to have power over weak and vulnerable people for one's own power games. The main idea is to provide non-judgmental, ongoing, focused emotional support.

I ~~do~~ have a purpose to live - to help others. Society needs



positive, loving change so nobody else should have to go through  
the pain that I have. God let me go through it so I can be  
sensitive to the needs of others.

[Spring Flower and her ex-husband facilitated emotional  
healing circles at the 1988 Rainbow Gathering in Texas and  
the Pennsylvania Regional Gathering later that summer.]